

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 06030 01 OF 02 251336Z

ACTION PA-02

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00

INRE-00 IO-14 ACDA-12 HA-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 SSM-05

/087 W

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O 241802Z FEB 78 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5947

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 06030

DEPT FOR S/PRS AND PA, PASS NSC FOR DR. BREZENISKI AND WHITE HOUSE FOR MR. POWELL.

TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L)

SUBJECT: ATHERTON STATEMENT FOLLOWING WORKING LUNCHEON

FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF AMBASSADOR ATHERTON'S STATEMENT TO THE PRESS FOLLOWING A WORKING LUNCHEON AT THEMERIDIEN HOTEL, CAIRO, FEBRUARY 24, 1978, PLUS REMARKS BY FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL.

ATHERTON: I HAVE JUST COMPLETED THE SECOND ROUND OF TALKS IN THIS MISSION THAT I AM ENGAGED IN. THIS WILL BE ONE OF A SERIES OF VISITS HERE. I WILL BE RETURNING TO THIS AFTERNOON. THIS HAS BEEN A MOST USEFUL OCCASION TO HEAR FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER, AND THIS AFTERNOON FROM PRESIDENT SADAT, ABOUT EGYPT'S LATEST THINKING. I BROUGHT WITH ME THE LATEST IMPRESSIONS OF ISRAELI THINKING, AND I'M TAKING BACK WITH ME SOME THOUGHTS AND IDEAS AND CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS FROM HERE. ALL OF THIS, OF COURSE, IS PART OF THE PROCESS OF WORKING TOWARD COMPLETION OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT. I BELIEVE IT

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 06030 01 OF 02 251336Z

IS A STEP IN A PROCESS THAT IS GOING TO CONTINUE. IT IS PART OF THE OVERALL PEACE PROCESS, WHICH WE, AS A GOVERNMENT, ARE QUITE DEDICATED TO. AS PRESIDENT CARTER SAID WE WILL BE REDOUBLING OUR EFFORTS IN THIS PERIOD. I'M PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL TO PRESIDENT SADAT FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RECEIVE ME TODAY, DESPITE HIS INDISPOSITION. IT WAS A MOST USEFUL MEETING, AND I WAS ABLE TO RE-CONFIRM TO HIM OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PEACE PROCESS. HE INFORMED

ME THAT HE REMAINS EQUALLY DEDICATED TO MAKING PROGRESS, AND I THINK THAT, AS I SAID AFTER MY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT WE ARE OFF TO A GOOD START.

QUESTION: DID YOU CARRY ANY KIND OF A MESSAGE, VERBAL OR WRITTEN FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO PRESIDENT SADAT?

ATHERTON: NOT ANY SPECIFIC MESSAGE. I'M CARRYING OF COURSE THE GREETINGS OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE BEST WISHES OF PRESIDENT CARTER FOR THIS MISSION, AND THIS PART OF THE OVERALL PEACE PROCESS. BASICALLY I'M SIMPLY PICKING UP WHERE I LEFT OFF BEFORE PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND CONTINUING THE EFFORT TO COMPLETE WORK ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

QUESTION: WAS THE PROBLEM OF CYPRUS MENTIONED IN YOUR TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT?

ATHERTON: NO, I'M HERE DEALING ENTIRELY WITH THE MISSION WHICH WAS ASSIGNED TO ME.

QUESTION: DID YOUR TALKS GO BETTER THAN EXPECTED?

ATHERTON: I THINK THEY WENT VERY WELL. I WOULD NOT LIKE TO TRY TO CHARACTERIZE EACH MEETING IN TERMS OF, OR IN COMPARISON WITH, PREVIOUS MEETINGS. BUT ON THE WHOLE THEY WENT VERY WELL AND I HAVE NO REASON TO THINK THAT THIS WILL NOT CONTINUE TO BE THE CASE.
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 06030 01 OF 02 251336Z

QUESTION: FROM JERUSALEM WHERE ARE YOU GOING NEXT?

ATHERTON: I ASSUME I'LL BE COMING BACK HERE. THE MAIN TASK IS IN THIS NEGOTIATION OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AS A FOLLOW-ON TO THE WORK THAT WAS STARTED IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. OF COURSE, AS I SAID BEFORE, THE PURPOSE IS TO TRY TO ARRIVE AT A DECLARATION THAT WILL PROVIDE A BASIS FOR BROADENING THE NEGOTIATIONS AND FOR THE JOINING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BY OTHER PARTIES.

QUESTION: (INAUDIBLE) ...

ATHERTON: I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH. LET ME SAY ONE FINAL THING. I MADE THIS POINT BEFORE, BUT I'LL MAKE IT AGAIN. I THINK IT IS SIMPLY NOT USEFUL OR POSSIBLE FOR ME AFTER EACH MEETING TO TRY TO DISCUSS WHAT WENT ON IN THAT PARTICULAR MEETING, OR TO TAKE THE TEMPERATURE OF EACH PARTICULAR DISCUSSION. THIS IS A PROCESS THAT IS GOING TO GO ON, AND THERE IS NO WAY TO BREAK IT UP INTO LITTLE BITS AND PIECES AND TRY TO DISCUSS ANY PARTICULAR PART OF IT. SO I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TODAY, OR IN ANY OF MY FUTURE TALKS, TO GET INTO CHARACTERIZATIONS OR DETAILS OF ANY

PARTICULAR CONVERSATION.

QUESTION: CAN YOU AT LEAST TELL US HOW LONG THIS PROCESS WILL CONTINUE?

ATHERTON: AS FAR AS THIS PHASE IS CONCERNED, OF COURSE, I WILL BE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON BEFORE PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S VISIT -- TO BE THERE FOR THAT. THAT IS THE NEXT MEETING AT THE TOP IN THIS PROCESS, SO THAT PUTS A TIME LIMIT ON THIS PHASE OF MY MISSION. BUT THAT AGAIN IS ANOTHER STEP IN THE WHOLE PROCESS. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THAT WILL DEPEND VERY MUCH ON WHAT HAS HAPPENED BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, AND WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON.

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PAGE 04 CAIRO 06030 01 OF 02 251336Z

QUESTION: WHAT DID THE PRESIDENT EMPHASIZE IN TALKS WITH MR. ATHERTON TODAY?

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 06030 02 OF 02 251339Z
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INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5948
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 06030

DEPT FOR S/PRS AND PA, PASS NSC FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI AND WHITE HOUSE
FOR MR. POWELL

KAMEL: THE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS ARE VERY WELL KNOWN AND HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY STATED BY HIM HERE AND DURING HIS VISIT IN THE STATES AND IN EUROPE. OUR POSITIONS ARE CLEAR. WE ARE VERY SINCERE AND GENUINE IN OUR DESIRE FOR PEACE AND WE WILL LEAVE NO POSSIBILITY UNEXPLORED TILL WE REACH OUR OBJECTIVES IN HAVING A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND HAVING STABILITY AND PEACE IN THIS AREA. AND SO, WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID TODAY IS IN THIS FRAME, AND IS THIS LINE, AND WE ARE VERY HAPPY WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON'S EFFORTS. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PHASE IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH IS GOING ON, AND WE FIND HIS CONTRIBUTION VERY USEFUL AND HELPFUL, AND WE HOPE THAT PROGRESS WILL BE ACHIEVED.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE POSITION OF THE PRESIDENT ON THE PALESTINIANS?

KAMEL: WELL, NO CHANGE THERE, I MEAN PRESIDENT SADAT'S POSITION
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 06030 02 OF 02 251339Z

ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION IS VERY CLEAR. THEY SHOULD HAVE THEIR RIGHTS IN SELF-DETERMINATION AND THERE IS NO CHANGE AND NEVER WILL BE A CHANGE IN THIS RESPECT. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
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